

Message Text

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14-11

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 FEA-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 AGR-05

CEA-01 COME-00 FRB-03 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 L-02 LAB-04

NSC-05 PA-01 AID-05 CIEP-01 SS-15 STR-04 TAR-01

TRSE-00 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01 AF-06 ARA-06 NEA-09 /123 W

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O R 170600Z APR 75

FM USDEL MTN GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 58

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

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PASS STR IMMEDIATE FOR AMBASSADOR DENT

PASS IMMEDIATE AGRICULTURE FOR YEUTTER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD GATT

SUBJECT: MTN: AGRICULTURE GROUP MEETING APRIL 15-16

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REFS: A) GENEVA 2610; B) GENEVA 2659

1. SUMMARY: AGRICULTURE GROUP MEETING ON APRIL 15-16 CONSISTED OF TWO SHORT PLENARY MEETINGS AND VERY LENGTHY RESTRICTED MEETINGS WITH KEY COUNTRIES. BOTH MEETINGS CONFIRMED COMPLETELY UNYIELDING EC POSITION WHICH HAS HARDENED SINCE LAST AGRICULTURE GROUP MEETING ON MARCH 24. STALEMATE IN AGRICULTURE GROUP IS NOW COMPLETE AND CAN ONLY BE BROKEN THROUGH BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN EC AND U.S. PRIOR TO NEXT AGRICULTURE GROUP MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MAY 7. AGRICULTURE GROUP MEETING RECESSED WITH UNDERSTANDING INTERIM WOULD BE USED FOR U.S.-EC BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS TO RESOLVE DIFFICULTIES. SEVERAL DELEGATIONS MADE SUGGESTIONS IN REGARD TO POSSIBLE INTERIM SOLUTIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. AS REPORTED IN REFTTEL (A) PRACTICALLY NO WORK TOOK PLACE IN APRIL 15 PLENARY MEETING. IN SHORT MEETING OF THE GROUP ON APRIL 16, SOME DELEGATIONS UNSUCCESSFULLY ATTEMPTED TO BREAK DEADLOCK BY SUGGESTING NONCONTRVERSIAL WORK PROGRAM. ARGENTINA PROPOSED THAT THREE COMMODITY GROUPS BE ESTABLISHED NOW (GRAINS, MEAT AND DAIRY) WITHOUT SPECIFYING IN DETAIL THEIR MANDATE. (ON BRAZILIAN INSISTENCE, FORMATION OF SUGAR SUBGROUP WAS DEFERRED FOR THE PRESENT.) YUGOSLAVIA ELABORATED ON THE ARGENTINE PROPOSAL, SUGGESTING THAT THE THREE COMMODITY SUBGROUPS (GRAIN, DAIRY, AND MEAT) SHOULD SEEK MULTILATERAL SOLUTIONS PRELIMINARY TO ACTUAL NEGOTIATIONS. THIS PROPOSAL, WHICH WOULD HAVE AVOIDED THE U.S. PROBLEM OF HAVING THE COMMODITY SUBGROUPS BEING DESIGNATED AS NEGOTIATING FORUMS AT THIS TIME, AND WITH A FIRM LINK TO LONDON GRAINS WORK, WOULD HAVE BEEN ACCEPTABLE TO U.S. DEL. HOWEVER, IT WAS REJECTED BY EC. SEVERAL DELEGATIONS (E.G. NIGERIA AND ARGENTINA) PROPOSED REFERENCE OF DISPUTE TO EARLY TNC MEETING BUT THIS RECEIVED LITTLE SUPPORT, BECAUSE MOST DELEGATIONS FELT THAT THIS WOULD HARDEN POSITIONS OF THE COMBATANTS. EC STRONGLY STATED NEED FOR FURTHER BILATERAL DISCUSSION AS BEST MEANS TO RESOLVE ISSUE. CONSENSUS THEN DEVELOPED AROUND SUGGESTION THAT MEETING RECESS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ON UNDERSTANDING THAT IT WAS THE GROUP'S WISH THAT THE INTERIM BE USED TO FIND COMMON GROUND FOR SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS DEFINED DURING THIS WEEK'S MEETING WHICH WOULD PERMIT WORK IN AGRICULTURE TO GET UNDERWAY. U.S. ALSO SUPPORTED RECESS. MEETING OF THE AGRICULTURE GROUP WAS RECESSED TO RECONVENE ON MAY 7 OR 8 WITH RESTRICTED GROUP MEETINGS TAKING PLACE EARLIER THAT WEEK IN GENEVA.

3. SECOND PLENARY MEETING AFFORDED U.S. OPPORTUNITY TO LAY OUT IN DETAIL U.S. POSITION (REF B) BEFORE FULL MEMBERSHIP OF AGRICULTURE GROUP.

4. THE DISCUSSIONS IN THE RESTRICTED MEETINGS CENTERED AROUND TWO BASIC ISSUES: (A) THE COMPETENCE OF THE TARIFF AND NON-TARIFF BARRIER GROUPS TO DEVELOP GENERAL RULES THAT WOULD IN PRINCIPLE BE ALSO APPLICABLE TO AGRICULTURE; AND (B) THE DEGREE OF NEGOTIATING COMPETENCE OF AGRICULTURE GROUP OR SUBGROUPS.

5. AS REPORTED IN REFTTEL A, THE EC POSITION CONSISTED IN ESSENCE OF A VERY RESTRICTIVE INTERPRETATION OF THE FEBRUARY 11 TNC CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT CONCERNING THE ROLE OF THE AGRICULTURE GROUP IN THE MTN. WHILE THE UNEASY ARRANGEMENT THEN REACHED BETWEEN THE U.S. AND EC PROVIDED FOR LEEWAY AS REGARDS EACH PARTY PRESERVING ITS POSITION ON THE LOCUS OF NEGOTIATIONS ON AGRICULTURAL ISSUES, THE COMMUNITY NOW INSISTS ON THE EXCLUSIVE AND AUTONOMOUS ROLE OF THE AGRICULTURE GROUP WITH REGARD TO ALL ASPECTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS ON AGRICULTURE.

6. COMMENT: EC TOLD US PRIVATELY FOLLOWING PLENARY THAT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN LONDON RESERVES TALKS UNTIL ISSUE OF GRAINS GROUP WITH NEGOTIATING MANDATE IN GENEVA IS RESOLVED. IT CLEAR FROM EC STATEMENTS AT APRIL 16 RESTRICTIVE MEETING AND PLENARY SESSION THAT EC DEL HERE HAD USED THE MAXIMUM OF THEIR NEGOTIATING FLEXIBILITY (WHICH WAS NOT MUCH IN ANY CASE). ON THE WHOLE, DISCUSSIONS THIS WEEK DID MUCH TO CLARIFY (BUT DID NOT NARROW) U.S.-EC BASIC DIFFERENCES AND TO MAKE CLEAR TO OTHER DELS THAT DIFFERENCE IS ONE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUBSTANCE RATHER THAN WHOLLY OF PROCEDURE.

7. IT IS CERTAIN THAT THE PRESENT DEADLOCK CAN ONLY BE BROKEN THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE EC COMMUNITY AND THE U.S. AND REPRESENTATIONS TO THE EC MEMBER STATES. THE EC REPRESENTATIVE INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO HAVE CONSULTATIONS BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING OF THE AGRICULTURE GROUP. I STATED I WOULD TELEPHONE EC COMMISSION EARLY NEXT WEEK, AFTER DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON AND DENT-SOAMES CONVERSATIONS, TO DETERMINE DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT U.S.-EC BILATERAL CONTACTS ON THIS SUBJECT. END COMMENT. WOLFF

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